



# National Weather Service Raleigh, NC

## SKYWARN Spotter Guide

Online at: [www.weather.gov/raleigh](http://www.weather.gov/raleigh)



### Methods of reporting severe weather to the NWS Raleigh:

- NWS Raleigh severe weather hotline: 1-800-444-7928
- Email storm photos to: [rah.reports@noaa.gov](mailto:rah.reports@noaa.gov)
- Tweet storm reports and photos to @NWSRaleigh
- Post storm reports and photos on our Facebook page. Simply search for “NWS Raleigh” on Facebook. Be sure to “Like” our Facebook page for NWS updates.

### Call the NWS when you observe:

- **Tornadoes**
  - What damage did you observe?
  - How long was it on the ground? When did it start and end?
- **Wall Clouds and Funnel Clouds**
  - Report if clouds are rotating and how long they have existed.
  - Watch for organization, persistence and rotation.
- **Flash Flooding**
  - Report flooded roadways, rivers and streams, giving approximate water depth.
  - Does the flooding consist of standing water or is it flowing?
  - Is the water level continuing to rise, staying steady or falling?
  - Any damage from the flooding or mud slides?
- **Winter Weather**
  - Report any occurrence of freezing rain, ice accumulation and damage.
  - Report precipitation type change-overs, and when they occurred
  - At the end of the event, report storm total snow or ice accumulation.
- **Severe Thunderstorm Straight-line wind**
  - Report any wind damage (damage to structures, trees power poles/lines down, etc).
  - If possible, report estimated or measured wind speed.
  - Details to submit for tree damage:
    - What is the height and diameter of the branch, limb or tree that was broken or blown down?
    - Was the tree healthy or decayed?
    - What type of tree was damaged, e.g., hardwood or softwood?
  - Details to submit for damage to structures.
    - Is the damage to a well-built structure or a weak outbuilding?
    - What is the main building material for the structure: wood, brick, metal, concrete, etc.?
    - If the structure is a mobile home, was it anchored down?
- **Hail**
  - At first, report any size hail
  - At the end of the event, report the size of the largest stone and any damage.
  - To estimate size, compare hail to well-known objects such as coins or balls, but not to marbles, or measure the hail with a ruler.

**Spotters should use the following guidelines when reporting:**

- Remain calm, speak clearly, and do not exaggerate the facts.
- If you are unsure of what you are seeing, make your report, but also express your uncertainty.
- Immediate, real-time reports are most helpful for warning operations, but delayed reports are also important, even days after an event.

**Your report should contain the following information:**

- WHO you are: trained spotter...give your name or spotter ID number if provided one
- WHAT you have witnessed: the specific weather event
- WHEN the event occurred: NOT when you make your report
- WHERE the event occurred...which may not necessarily be your present location. Use well known roads or landmarks when describing the location.

**Estimating wind speed (mph) from damage or effects:**

25-31	Large branches in motion
32-38	Whole trees in motion
39-54	Twigs break off trees, wind impedes walking
55-72	Damage to TV antennas, large branches break off trees
73-112	Surfaces off roofs peeled off, windows broken, trailer homes overturned
113+	Roofs blown from houses, weak buildings and trailer homes destroyed, large trees uprooted, train cars blown off tracks

**When reporting hail size, it is useful to reference common objects, such as:**

- Pea 1/4"
- Dime 7/10"
- Penny 3/4"
- Nickel 7/8"
- Quarter 1"
- Half Dollar 1 1/4"
- Walnut or Ping-Pong Ball 1 1/2"
- Golf Ball 1 3/4"
- Lime 2"
- Tennis Ball 2 1/2"
- Baseball 2 3/4"
- Softball 4"

**Useful web sites:**

- NWS Raleigh: <http://www.weather.gov/Raleigh>
- NWS Raleigh SKYWARN page: <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/rah/skywarn>
- Spotter Guide: <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/rah/skywarn/SpotterGuide2011.pdf>
- NWS Raleigh Products via Twitter: [http://twitter.com/iembot\\_rah](http://twitter.com/iembot_rah)
- Rainfall reporting program: <http://www.cocorahs.org>
- Thunderstorm/tornado watches, outlooks, and reports: <http://www.spc.noaa.gov>

**SKYWARN Training Certificate:**

- If you would like to obtain a certificate for attending SKYWARN training, you can download and customize one for yourself via the following link:
  - [http://www.erh.noaa.gov/rah/skywarn/certificates/RAH\\_SKYWARN\\_Certificate.pdf](http://www.erh.noaa.gov/rah/skywarn/certificates/RAH_SKYWARN_Certificate.pdf)
    - The password is: skywarn